

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



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## MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITIES OPERATING UNDER HOME RULE CHARTERS

(prepared and adopted under provisions of the Home Rule Amendment and M.G.L., c. 43B)

**as of 5/2000**

### **CITIES: MAYOR - COUNCIL**

Agawam (1)	Easthampton (2)	Newton
Amesbury (2)	Gloucester (2)	West Springfield
Attleboro	Lynn	Weymouth
Beverly	Methuen (1) (2)	

### **COUNCIL - MANAGER\***

Worcester	Greenfield (3)
Barnstable	Southbridge
Franklin (2)	Watertown

### **TOWNS: REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING - BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MANAGER+**

Auburn	Dedham	Plymouth	Walpole
Billerica (2)	Falmouth	Reading	Webster
Chelmsford	Natick	Stoughton	Winchester
Dartmouth		Swampscott (4)	

### **OPEN TOWN MEETING - BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MANAGER+**

Abington	Eastham	Medfield	Norwell	Sturbridge (2)
Acton	Easton	Middleton	Orleans	Sutton
Acushnet	Grafton	Millbury	Oxford	Townsend
Ashland	Harwich	Millis (4)	Palmer	Truro
Athol	Hudson	Nahant (4)	Provincetown	Wakefield
Bedford	Lunenburg	North Andover	Rockland (4)	Wareham
Bellingham	Lynnfield	North Reading	Salisbury	Wellfleet
Blackstone	Mansfield	Northborough	Scituate	Westborough
Chatham	Marshfield	Northbridge	Seekonk (5)	Westwood
Dracut	Maynard	Norton	Stow	Winchendon

\* Council-manager form most often associated with CITY government; however, the communities listed here, with the exception of Worcester, identify themselves as towns, and Southbridge secured passage of a special act specifying that all laws which apply to towns are applicable to Southbridge.

+ "Manager" is used here as a generic title, connoting a professional administrative position of similar responsibility, e.g., town administrator, executive secretary, town executive, town coordinator, etc.

### **NOTES:**

(1) AGAWAM originally adopted council-manager charter in 1971; in 1988, town secured passage of a special act replacing the manager with an elected mayor (2 year term). The first mayor took office in 1989.

METHUEN amended its charter in November, 1992 by special act and in November, 1993 elected a mayor (2 year term) to replace the appointed manager. Mayor assumed office January, 1994.

(2) had previously adopted home rule charter.

(3) charter also provides for election of a five-member board of selectmen.

(4) charter does not provide for a management position, although Millis, Nahant, and Rockland subsequently created such a position.

(5) Seekonk revised its representative town meeting charter in 1995, returning to open town meeting.

**SPRING 2000** –Dartmouth, Athol, West Springfield and Millbury adopted charters in April, 2000.

**COMMISSIONS IN PROCESS: Barnstable, Beverly (both elected 11/99); Bourne and Uxbridge (elected spring, 2000)**

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**CITIES: MAYOR - COUNCIL**

**GOVERNMENT PRIOR TO HOME RULE CHARTER ADOPTION**

Agawam (1)	Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen
Amesbury	Rep. Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen/Administrator
Attleboro	
Beverly	Special Act based on Plan B
Easthampton	Home Rule Charter - RTM/Selectmen/Town Administrator
Gloucester	Council - Manager (Special Act)
Leominster (2)	Special Act
Lynn	Special Act Mayor-Council
Methuen	Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen
Newton	Special Act Mayor Council
Weymouth	RTM/Selectmen/Administrator

**COUNCIL - MANAGER\***

Barnstable	RTM/Board of Selectmen
Franklin	Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen
Greenfield	Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen
Southbridge	Town Meeting/Board of Selectmen
Watertown	RTM/Board of Selectmen
Worcester	Plan E council-manager

**TOWNS: REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING - BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MANAGER+**

(all towns in this category except Chelmsford and Webster, has RTM/Board of Selectmen government prior to adoption of the home rule charter; charters usually adopted to reduce size of rtm, add or strengthen an existing management position (e.g., from an executive secretary to a town manager of administrator), and change other officers from elected to appointed)

Auburn	
Billerica (2)	
Chelmsford	changed from Open to Rep. Town Meeting, strengthened manager position
Dedham	
Easthampton	reduced size of RTM, created manager position
Falmouth	reduced size of RTM, created administrator position
Natick	changed to smaller RTM, reduced BOS to 3, strengthened manager position
Plymouth	reduced size of RTM
Reading	reduced size of RTM, created manager position (had ES prior to charter)
Stoughton	
Swampscott	established RTM
Walpole	
Webster	established RTM, strengthened management position
Winchester	reduced size of RTM, established department structure, strengthened mgt. position

**OPEN TOWN MEETING - BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MANAGER+**

(all towns in this category had OTM/Board of Selectmen government prior to adoption of the home rule charter; charters usually adopted to add or strengthen an existing management position (e.g., from an executive secretary to a town manager of administrator), and change other officers from elected to appointed)

Abington	
Acton	strengthen management position
Acushnet	
Ashland	strengthen management position, change some elected offices to appointed

Bedford	
Bellingham	strengthen management position, create new department structure, change some elected offices to appointed
Blackstone	
Chatham	strengthen management position
Dracut	
Eastham	create management position
Easton	
Grafton	strengthen management position
Harwich	create management position
Hudson	
Lunenburg	create management position w/general & financial mgt. responsibilities
Lynnfield	
Mansfield	
Marshfield	
Maynard	strengthen management position
Medfield	
Middleton	create management position
Millis	
Nahant	
North Andover	strengthen management position
North Reading	
Northborough	strengthen management position
Northbridge	create management position
Norton	strengthen management position
Norwell	
Orleans	create management position
Oxford	create management position
Palmer	
Provincetown	
Rockland	
Salisbury	strengthen management position
Scituate	strengthen management position; elect 2 of 5 selectmen from districts
Seekonk	had RTM from 1975-1995; changed to OTM and strengthened management position in 1995.
Stow	created management position, changed some offices from elected to appointed
Sturbridge (2)	strengthened management position
Sutton	strengthened management position, changed some offices from elected to appointed
Townsend	
Truro	created management position
Wakefield	
Wareham	
Wellfleet	created management position
Westborough	
Westwood	
Winchendon	created management position

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OTM - Open Town Meeting; RTM - Representative Town Meeting

NOTES:

(1) AGAWAM originally adopted council-manager charter in 1971; in 1988, town secured passage of a special act replacing the manager with an elected mayor (2 year term). The first mayor took office in 1989. METHUEN amended its charter in November, 1992 by special act and in November, 1993 elected a mayor (2 year term) to replace the appointed manager. Mayor assumed office January, 1994.

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MC:EOCD, 5/95

## GOVERNMENTS IN MASSACHUSETTS' LARGER\* MUNICIPALITIES

CITY/TOWN	FORM OF GOVERNMENT	HOW ESTABLISHED
Boston	Mayor - Council	special act
Worcester	Council - Manager	home rule charter
Springfield	Mayor - Council	PLAN A (see Note 1 for "Plans")
Lowell	Council - Manager	PLAN E
New Bedford	Mayor - Council	PLAN B
Cambridge	Council - Manager	PLAN E (proportional representation)
Brockton	Mayor - Council	PLAN B
Fall River	Mayor - Council	PLAN A
Quincy	Mayor - Council	PLAN A
Newton	Mayor - Council	home rule charter
Lynn	Mayor - Council	home rule charter
Somerville	Mayor - Council	special act charter
Lawrence	Mayor - Council	special act charter
Framingham	RTM - BOS- Manager	special act charter (1996)
Waltham	Mayor - Council	special act charter
Medford	Mayor - Council	special act charter
Chicopee	Mayor - Council	special act charter
Brookline	RTM - BOS - Administrator	special acts for rtm and administrator
Weymouth	RTM - BOS - Administrator	special acts for rtm and administrator
Malden	Mayor - Council	special act charter
Haverhill	Mayor - Council	PLAN A

### BOS - Board of Selectmen

\* -defined here as municipalities above 50,000 population (1990 U.S. Census)

Note 1: PLANS OF GOVERNMENT - Chapter 43 of the Massachusetts General Laws provides six model plans of government. A "shorthand" description of such plans -- Plan A/strong mayor; Plan B/weak mayor, Plan C/commission, Plan D/council-manager, Plan E/council-manager, Plan F/partisan mayor-council. With the passage of the Home Rule Amendment in 1966, and its implementation via Chapter 43B (the Home Rule Procedures Act) in 1967, it is no longer possible to adopt one of the model plans as provided in C. 43, although 14 cities are still operating under the plans, and the plans still serve to guide the preparation of special act charters in cities. See EOCD brief report "City Government in Massachusetts" for a more thorough description of the features of the c. 43 "plans." NOTE: No city in the Commonwealth operates under Plan C (commission), Plan D (council-manager), or Plan F (partisan mayor-council).

## HOME RULE CHARTERS:

## SPECIAL ACT CHARTERS

## SPECIAL ACTS/T.M.\*

Abington	Harwich	Plymouth	Adams	Lexington	Burlington
Acton	Hudson	Provincetown	<b>Amherst</b>	<b>Middleborough</b>	Duxbury
Acushnet	Leominster	Reading	<b>Andover</b>	Needham	Framingham
AGAWAM	Lynn	Rockland	<b>Arlington</b>	<b>Norwood</b>	Hopedale
Amesbury	Lynnfield	Salisbury	Ashburnham	<b>Saugus</b>	Somerset
Ashland	Mansfield	Scituate	<b>Concord</b>	Sheffield	Weymouth
Attleboro	Marshfield	Seekonk	<b>Danvers</b>	<b>Shrewsbury</b>	
Auburn	Maynard	Southbridge	Great Barrington	Stoneham	
Barnstable	Medfield	Stoughton	<b>Holden</b>	Tewksbury	
Bedford	Methuen	Stow	Hull	West Springfield	
Bellingham	Middleton	Sturbridge	<b>Ipswich</b>	Westford	
Billerica	Millis	Sutton	Lee	<b>Williamstown</b>	
Blackstone	Nahant	Swampscott	Lenox	<b>Wilmington</b>	
Chelmsford	Natick	Truro			
Dedham	Newton	Walpole			
Dracut	North Andover	Watertown			
Eastham	North Reading	Webster			
Easthampton	Northborough	Wellfleet			
Easton	Northbridge	Westborough			
Falmouth	Norton	Westwood			
Franklin	Norwell	Winchendon			
Gloucester	Orleans	Winchester			
Grafton	Oxford	Worcester			
Greenfield	Palmer				Williamstown

\* creates town manager or administrator position

**bold-face type:** special act charter adopted prior to adoption of state's Home Rule Amendment (1966)

# CHARTER ACTIVITY IN TOWNS UNDER 10,000 POPULATION

Form of Government: OPEN TOWN MEETING - BOARD OF SELECTMEN - MANAGER\*

SPECIAL ACT CHARTERS	Adopted (yr)	HOME RULE CHARTERS	Adopted (yr)
Adams	1983	Acushnet	1971
Ashburnham	1986	Chatham	1994
Becket	1989	Eastham	1991
Dalton	1995	Harwich (population: 10,275)	1987
Great Barrington	1992	Middleton	1974
<del>Hopedale (TM)</del>	<del>1983</del> repealed, 1997	Millis (Note 1)	1977
Lee (RTM)	1991	Nahant (Note 2)	1980
Lenox	1991	Norwell	1973
Nahant (TM)	1992	Orleans	1987
Sheffield	1989	Provincetown	1972, 1990
Williamstown	1956	Salisbury	1989
		Stow	1991
		Sutton	1988
		Truro (See Note 3)	1992
		Wellfleet	1985
		Winchendon	1981

\* "Manager" used here as generic term denoting professional management position

(TM) - special act establishing management position only.

(RTM) - representative town meeting is legislative body.

Note 1: Charter does not contain provision for a manager position; Millis has an executive secretary.

Note 2: No manager provision in charter; created management position by special act in 1992

Note 3: Smallest town [population] with home rule charter.





FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES below 10,000 population

Town	Population	Form of Government	How/when established
Acushnet	9,554	OTM - BOS (3) - ES	home rule charter, 1971
Adams	9,445	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	special act charter, 1983
Norfolk	9,270	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	special act for town administrator. 1994
Winchendon	8,805	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1981
Blackstone	8,023	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1972
Sturbridge	7,775	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charters 1973,1987
Great Barrington+	7,725	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	special act charter, 1992
Southwick	7,667	OTM - BOS (3) - AO	state law/local bylaw
Groton	7,511	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Dalton	7,155	OTM - BOS (3) - TM	special act charter, 1995
Salisbury+	6,882	OTM - BOS (5) - TM	home rule charter, 1989
Sutton++	6,871	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1988
Southborough	6,628	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Chatham	6,579	OTM - BOS (5) - TM	home rule charter, 1994
Templeton	6,438	OTM - BOS (5) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Georgetown	6,384	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Nantucket	6,012	OTM - BOS (5) - ES	home rule charter, 1996
Lee+	5,849*	RTM - BOS (3) - TA	special act charter, 1991
Orleans	5,838	OTM - BOS (5) - TE	home rule charter, 1987
Granby	5,565	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Ashburnham+	5,438	OTM - BOS (3) - TA	special act charter, 1986
Stow+	5,238	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1991
Lenox++	5,069	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	special act charter, 1991
Deerfield	5,018	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw

KEY BOS - Board of Selectmen      AA - Administrative Assistant      TA - Town Administrator ( ) -  
number of members      AO - Administrative Officer      TE - Town Executive  
OTM - Open Town Meeting      EA - Executive Assistant      TM - Town Manager  
RTM - Representative Town Meeting      ES - Executive Secretary

\* - Lee adopted the representative town meeting in 1968, when population of the town exceeded 6,000 (minimum for rtm adoption)

+ - established management position for the first time via home rule charter or special act

++ - modified provisions of existing management position via home rule charter or special act

### FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES below 5,000 population

Town	Population	Form of Government	How/when established
Middleton	4,921	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1974
Dover	4,915	OTM - BOS (3) - EA	state law/local bylaw
Eastham	4,462	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1991
Cheshire	3,354	OTM - BOS (3)	state law/local bylaw
West Newbury	3,622	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law, see also special act (N.1)
Sunderland	3,363	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Boxborough	3,687	OTM - BOS (3) - ES	state law/local bylaw
Essex	3,337	OTM - BOS (3)	state law/local bylaw
Princeton	3,248	OTM - BOS (3) - ES	state law/local bylaw, ES in 1991
Hatfield	3,230	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Bolton	3,286	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Tisbury	3,049	OTM - BOS (3) - ES	state law/local bylaw, ES in 1990
Edgartown	3,089	OTM - BOS (3) - ES	state law/local bylaw
Lanesborough	2,975	OTM - BOS (3) - TA	state law/local bylaw, TA in 1993
Brimfield	3,136	OTM - BOS (3)	state law/local bylaw
Brookfield	3,064	OTM - BOS (3)	state law/local bylaw
Sheffield	2,985	OTM - BOS (3) - TA	special act charter, 1991
Northfield	2,961	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Oak Bluffs	2,821	OTM - BOS (3) - ES	state law/local bylaw, ES in 1993
Hubbardston	3,124	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Ashby	2,835	OTM - BOS (3) - TA	state law/local bylaw
Williamsburg	2,518	OTM - BOS (3) - AA	state law/local bylaw
Wellfleet	2,563	OTM - BOS (5) - TA	home rule charter, 1987

**KEY:**

BOS - Board of Selectmen	AA - Administrative Assistant
( ) - number of members	AO - Administrative Officer
OTM - Open Town Meeting	EA - Executive Assistant
RTM - Representative Town Meeting	ES - Executive Secretary
	TA - Town Administrator

## HOME RULE CHARTER TRENDS:

- reduce size of representative town meeting
- change traditionally elected offices to appointed status
- create (or strengthen) management position
- consolidate related department functions
- prescribe uniform budget preparation/review/adoption process
- provide recall provisions (55% of home rule charters)
- most charter activity undertaken by towns between 10,000 - 25,000 population  
Larger population exceptions in the last ten years: Worcester, Chelmsford, Barnstable, Falmouth  
Smaller population " " : Provincetown, Truro, Wellfleet, Sutton, Stow
- 1983 to 1993 -- 44 commissions elected, 25 charter proposals adopted (57% adoption rate)

Only situation somewhat comparable to Amherst -- Plymouth charter revision via special act (1991) --

- change management position; increase manager responsibilities/authority (similar to Amherst special act)
- capital improvement plan prepared by manager
- consolidated departments established -- finance, public works, and planning & development
- recall provisions added by separate special act (1990)
- had reduced size of rtm at time of initial charter adoption (1973)